ADAM BELL,
CLIM of the CLOUGH,
AND
WILLIAM of CLOUDESLE.

LONDON,

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Adam Bell.

MErry it was in the green Forrest
among the leaves green:
Whereas men hunt east and west
with bows and arrows keen,
To raise the Deer out of their den,
such sights have not oft been seen:
As by three yeomen of the North Countrey,
by them it is I mean.
The one of them highe Adam Bell,
another Clim of the Clough,
The third was William of Cloudesle,
an Archer good enough.
They were out-lawed for Venison,
these Yeomen every chone:
They swore them brethren on a day,
to English wood for to gone.
Now lith and listen Gentlemen,
that of mirth lovely to hear:
Two of them were single men,
the third had wedded fear.
William was the wedded man,
much more then was his care:
He said to his brethren on a day,
to Carlile he would fare,
To speak with fair Alice his wife,
and with his children three:
By my troth said Adam Bell,
not by the counsel of me:
For if we go to Carlile, brother,
and from this wild [illegible]
If that the Justice do you take,
your life is at an end.

If

If that I come not to morrow by nother
by prime to you again,
Trust you then that I am taken,
or elle that I am slain.
He took his leave of his brethren two,
and to Carlile he is gone:
There he knocked at his own window
shortly and anon.
Where be you fair Alice? he said,
my wife and children thre?
Lightly let in thine own husband
William of Cloudesle.
Alas then said fair Alice,
and sighed very sore:
This place hath ben kept for your
full halfe a year and more.
Now I am here said Cloudesle,
I would that in I were.
Now fetch us meat and drink enough,
and let us make good cher.
She fetcht him meat and drink plenty,
like a true wedded wife;
And pleased him with what he had,
whom she loved as her life.
There lay an old wife in that place
a little before the fire:
Which William had found of charity,
more then seven year.
Up she rose and forth she goes,
evil might she speed therefore;
For she had not set no foot on ground,
in seven years before.
She went into the justice-hall
as fast as she could hie;
This night she said is com to town

William of Cloudesle.
Thereat the Justice was full fain,
and so the Sheriff also:
Thou shalt not travel hithere for nought,
thy meed thou shalt have ere thou go:
They gave to her a right good gown,
of scarlet it was I hea, o sain.
Se took the gift and home she went,
and couched her down again.
They raised the Town of mere Carlise,
in all the hast they can:
And thronging fast unto the house,
as fast as they might gan:
There they beset the good yeoman
about on every side:
William heard great noise of the folk,
that thitherward fast hid.
Alice opened a back window
and looked all about:
She was ware of the Justice and Sheriff,
and with that a full great rout.
Alas then Treason, then cried Alice,
ever woe may thou be:
Go into my chamber husband she said,
swæt William of Cloudesle.
He took his sword and his buckler,
his bow and children thræ:
And went into the strongest chamber,
where he thought surest to be.
Fair Alice like a lover true,
with a Pollax in her hand,
Said, he shall dye that cometh in
this door while I may stand.
Cloudesle bent a right good bow
that was of trusty træ:

He

He smote the Justice on the breast,
that his Arrow burst in three.
Gods curse on his heart said William,
this day thy coat did on,
If it had been no better than mine,
it had gone near the bone.
Yeild thee Cloudesle said the Justice,
and thy bow and thy arrows thee fro;
Gods curse on his heart said fair Alice,
that my husband counselleth so.
Set fire on the house said the Sheriff,
sith no better it will be:
And burn we therein William, he saith,
his wife and children three.
They fired the house in many a place,
the fire flew on high:
Alas then said fair Alice,
I see we here shall die.
William opened a back window,
that was in his chamber hie:
And there with sheets he did see down
his wife and children three:
For Christs love do them no harm,
but wreak you all on me.
William shot so wondrous well,
till his arrows were all gone:
And fire so fast upon him fell,
that his bow string brent is two.
The sparkles brent and fell upon
good William of Cloudesle:
But then was he a wofull man,
and said, this is a Cowards death to me.
Lever had I said William,

with

with my sword in the rout to run:
Then here amongst mine enimies wood,
so cruelly to burn.
He took his sword and buckler then,
and among them all he ran,
Where the people thickest were,
he smote down many a man.
There might no man abide his strokes,
so fiercely on them he ran:
Then they threw windows and doors on him
and so took that yeoman.
There they him bound hand and foot,
and in a deep Dungeon him cast.
Now Cloudesle then said the Justice,
thou shalt be hanged in hast,
One vow shall I make said the Sheriff,
a pair of new Gallows thou shalt have,
And all the Gates of Carlile shall be shut,
there shall no man come in thereat.
There shall not help Clim of the Clough,
nor yet Adam Bell,
Though they come with a thousand moe,
nor all the devils in hell.
Early in the morning the Justice arose,
to the gates fast gan he gone:
And commanded to shut close
lightly every chone.
Then went to the Market-place,
as fast as they can hie:
A pair of new Gallows there he did set up,
beside the Pillory.
A little boy stood them among;
and askt what meant that Gallow-tree:
They said to hang a good yeoman.
called William of Cloudesle.

That little boy was town Swinehard,
and kept fair Alices swine:
Full oft he had sæn Cloudesle in the wood,
and gave him there to dine;
He went out of a crevice of the Wall,
and lightly to the wood he ran:
There he met with these weight yeomam
shortly and anon.
Alas then said the little boy,
you tarry here all too long:
Cloudesle is tane and doom'd to deeth,
and ready to be hang'd.
Alas then said good Adam Bell,
that ever we saw this day:
He might have tarried here with us,
so oft we did him pray.
He might have dwelt in græn Forrest,
under these shaddows shæn:
And kept both him and us at rest
out of trouble and teen.
Adam bent a right good bow,
a great Hart soon he had slain:
Take that child he said to thy dinner,
and bring me mine arrow again.
Now go we hence said these jolly yeomen,
tarry we no longer here:
We shall him borrow by Gods grace,
though we buy it full dear.
To Carlile went these good yeomen,
in a merry morning of May:
Here is a sight of Cloudesle,
another is for to say.

AND when they came to merry Carlile
in a fair morning tide:

They

They found the Gates shut them unto
about on every side.
Alas then said good Adam Bell,
that ever we were made men,
These Gates are shut so wondrous wark,
that we may not come therein.
Then spake Clim of the Clough,
with a wile we will us in win,
Let us say we be Messengers,
strait come from the King.
Adam said I have a Letter, well
let us wisely work,
We will say we have the Kings Seal,
I hold the Porter no Clerk.
Then Adam Bell beat at the Gate,
with strokes great and strong;
The Porter heard such a noise thereat,
and to the Gates he thong.
Who is there, said the Porter,
that maketh all this knocking,
We be two Messengers said they then,
be come right from the King.
We have a Letter said Adam Bell,
to the Justice I must it bring,
Let us in our Message to do,
that we were again to the King.
Here cometh none in said the Porter,
by him that died on the tree,
Till that false Thief be hang'd,
call'd William of Cloudesle.
Then spake Clim of the Clough,
and swore by Mary free;
If that we stand long without,
like a thief hang'd thou shalt be;
Loe here we have the Kings Seal,

what Lurden art thou wood?
The Porter wænd it had bæn so,
and lightly did off his hood.
Welcome is my Lords seat he said
for that you shall come in:
He opened the gate full shortly,
an evil opening for him.
Now are we in said Adam Bell,
whereof we are right fain:
But Christ he knows assuredly,
how we shall out again.
Had we the Keys said Clim of the Clough,
right well then should we spæd:
Then might we come out well enough,
when we sæ time and næd.
They called the Porter to counsel,
and wrung his neck in two,
And cast him in a dæp dungeon,
and took the Keys him fro.
Now am I Porter said Adam Bell,
sæ brother the Keys we have here.
The worst Porter in merry Carlisle,
that came this hundred year.
Now we will our bows bend,
into the Town will we go,
For to deliver our dear brother,
that lyeth in care and woe.
Then they bent their good Yew bows,
and looked their strings were round,
The Market-place in merry Carlisle,
they beset in that stound.
And as they looked them beside,
a pair of new gallows they sæ:
And the Justice with a Quest of Esquires,
that judgeth William hang'd to be.

And

And Cloudesle lay there in a Cart,
fast bound both fet and hand:
And a strong Rope about his neck,
already for to hang.
The Justice call'd to him a lad,
Cloudesle's cloaths he should have,
To take the measure of that yeoman,
and thereby to make him a grave.
I have seen a great marvel said Cloudesle,
as between this and prime:
He that maketh a grave for me,
himself may lie therein.
Thou speakest proudly said the Justice,
I will thee hang with my hand:
Full well heard this his brethren two,
where still as they did stand.
Then William cast an eye aside,
and saw his two brethren
At the corner of the Market-place well prepar'd
ready the Justice to chase.
I see comfort said Cloudesle,
yet hope I well to fare:
If I might have my hands let free,
right little might I care.
Then spake good Adam Bell,
to Clim of the Clough so free:
Brother see you mark the Justice well,
loe yonder you may him see.
At the Sheriff shoot I will
strongly with an arrow keen,
A better shoot in merry Carlile,
this seven years was not seen.
They loosed their arrows both at once,
of no man they had dread:

The

The one hit the Justice the other the Sheriff
that both their sides gan bleed,
All men voided that stood them nigh,
when the Justice fell to the ground.
And the Sheriff nigh him by,
either had his deaths wound,
All the Citizens fast gan flee,
they durst no longer abide,
There lightly they looked Cloudesle,
where he with Ropes lay tied.
William stept to an Officer of the Town,
his Ax out of his hand he wrung,
On each side he smote them down,
him thought he tarried all too long.
William said to his brethren two,
this day let us live and die:
If ever you have need as I have now,
the same shall you find by me.
They shot so well that tide,
for their strings were of silk pure,
That they kept the street on every side,
the battel did long endure.
They fought together like brethren true,
like hardy men and bold:
Many a man to the ground they threw,
and made many a heart cold.
But when their arrows were all gone,
men prested on them full fast,
They drew their swords then anon,
and their bows from them cast.
They went lightly on their way,
with swords and bucklers round:
By that it were mid of the day,
they made many a wound,
Many an out-horn in Carlile was blown,

and

and the Bells backward did ring:
Many a woman said alas,
and many their hands did wring.
The Maior of Carlile forth come was,
and with him a full great rout:
These Yeomen dread him full sore,
for of their lives they were in great doubt,
The Maior came armed a full great pace,
with a Pollax in his hand:
Many a strong man with him was,
within that stour to stand.
The Maior smote at Cloudesle with his bill,
his buckler brast in two;
Full many a Yeoman with great evil,
alas treason they cried for woe.
Keep we the Gates fast they bad,
that these Traitors thereout not go:
But all for nought was that they wrought,
for so fast down they were laid,
Till they all three that so manfully fought,
were gotten out of a braid.
Have here your Keys said Adam Bell,
my Office here I forsake:
If you do by my counsel,
a new Porter do you make,
He threw the Keys at their heads:
and bad them evil to thrive;
And all that letteth any good Yeoman,
to come and comfort his wife.
Thus be the good Yeomen gone to the wood,
as lightly as leaf on linde;
They laugh and be merry in their mood,
their Enemies were far behind.
When they came to Englishy wood,
under the trusty tree;

There they found Bowes full gay,
and arrowes great plenty.
So God me help said Adam Bell,
and Clim of the Clough so fre,
I would we were in merry Carlile,
before that fair meny.
Then sate they down and made gode cher,
and eat and drunk full well:
Here is a fit of these weight yemen,
another I will you tell.

As they sat in English wood,
under their trusty tre,
They thought they heard a woman wep,
but her they could not se.
Sore then sighed fair Alice,
that ever I saw this day:
For now is my dear husband slain,
alas and well away.
Might I have spoken with his dear brethren
or with either of them twain,
To shew to them what him befel,
my heart were out of pain.
Cloudesle walkt a little aside,
and lookt under the grene wood linde,
He saw his wife and children thre
full woe in heart and mind.
Welcome Wife said William,
under this trusty tre:
I had wend yesterday by twelf a St. John,
thou shouldest me never se.
Now well is me she said that ye be here,
my heart is out of woe:
Dame be said be merry and glad,
and thank my brethren two.

Hereof

Hereof to speak said Adam Bell,
I wis it not to boot:
The meat that we must sup withal,
it resteth yet fast on foot.
Then went they down into the lawnd,
these Noblemen all three:
Each of them slew a Hart of Greece,
the best they could there see.
Have here the best Alice my wife,
said William of Cloudesse,
Because ye so boldly stood by me,
when I was slain full nigh.
Then they went to Supper
with such meat as they had;
And thanked God for their fortune,
they were merry and glad.
And when they had supped well,
certain without any lease,
Cloudesse said we will to our King,
to get us a Charter of peace.
Alice shall be at our sojourning,
in a Nunnery here beside:
My two Sons shall with her go,
and there they shall abide.
My eldest Son shall go with me,
for him I have no care,
And he shall bring you word again
how that we do fare.
Thus be these good Yeomen to London gone
as fast as they can hie,
Till they came to the Kings Pallace,
where they would needs be.
And when they came to the Kings Court,
unto the Pallace gate:
Of no man would they ask leave,

but

but boldly went in thereat.
They proceeded preſent into the hall,
of no man they had dreade.
The Porter came after, and did them call,
and with them can to chide.
The Uſher ſaid, Yeomen what would you
I pray you tell to me,
You might have Officers ſtout,
good ſirs from whence be ye?
Sir, we be out-laws of the Forreſt,
certain without any leaſe,
And hither we be come to the King,
to get us a Charter of peace.
And when they came before the King,
as it was the Law of the Land,
They kneeled down without leering,
and each held up his hand.
They ſaid, Lord we beſeech thee here,
that ye will grant us grace:
For we have ſlain your fat and fallow Deer
in many a ſundry place.
What be your names then ſaid the King?
anon that you tell me.
Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough,
and William of Cloudeſle.
Be ye thoſe thieves ſaid the King,
that men have told to me:
Here to God I make a vow,
ye ſhall be hang'd all three,
Ye ſhall be dead without mercy,
as I am King of this Land:
He commanded his Officers every chone,
faſt on them to lay hand,
Therefore they took theſe good Yeomen,
and arreſted them all three:

So may I thrive said Adam Bell,
this game liketh not me.
But good Lord we beseech you now,
that you will grant us grace,
Inasmuch as we do to you come,
or else that we may from you pass,
With such weapons as we have here,
till we be out of your place:
And if we live this hundred Year,
we will ask of you no grace.
Ye speak proudly said the King,
ye shall be hanged all three,
That were great pitty said the Quen,
that any grace might be.
My Lord when I came first into this Land
to be your wedded wife,
The first boon that I would ask,
you would grant me belive:
And I never asked ye none till now,
therefore good Lord grant it me.
Now ask it, Madam, said the King,
and granted it shall be.
Then good Lord I you beseech,
these yeomen grant ye me:
Madam ye might have asked a boon,
that should have been worth them all three,
Ye might have asked Towers and Towns.
Parks and Forrests plenty;
None so pleasant to my pay she said,
nor none so leef to me.
Madam sith it is your desire,
your asking granted shall be:
But I had lever have given you,
good Market-Towns three.
The Quen was a glad woman,

and ſaid Lord gramarcy,
I dare undertake for them,
that true men they ſhall be:
But good Lord ſpeak ſome merry word,
that they might comfort ſee.
I grant you grace then ſaid the King,
waſh fellows, and to meat go ye.
they had not ſitten but a while,
certain without leaſing:
There came two Meſſengers out of the north
with Letters to the King.
And when they came before the King,
they knæled down upon their knæ:
And ſaid your Officers greet you well,
of Carliſle in the North Country.
How fareth my Juſtice, (ſaid the King)
and my Sheriff alſo?
Sir they be ſlain without leaſing,
and many an Officer moe,
Who hath them ſlain? ſaid the King,
anon that you tell me:
Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough,
and William of Cloudeſle.
Alas for truth then ſaid the King,
my heart is wondrous ſore:
I had lever than a thouſand pound,
I had known this before.
For I have granted them grace,
and that forethinketh me:
But had I known all this before,
they had been hanged all thre.
The King opened the Letter anon,
himſelf he read it tho:
And there he found how theſe outlaws had
thre hundred men and moe. (ſlain,

First

First the Justice and the Sheriff,
and the Maior of Carlile town,
Of all the Constables and Catchpoles,
alive he left not one.
The bayliffs and the headles both,
and the Sergeants of the Law:
And forty Foresters of the fee,
these outlaws have ywaw,
And broke his Parks and slain his deer.
of all they chose the best:
So perillous outlaws as they were,
walked not by East nor West.
When the King this Letter had read.
in heart he sighed full sore:
Take up the Table then said he,
for I can eat no more.
The King then called his best Archers,
to the buts with him to go:
I will see these fellows shoot then said he,
that in the North have wrought this woe.
The Kings Bow-men buskt them blithe,
and the Queens Archers also:
So did these weight yeomen,
with them they thought to go:
There twice or thrice they shot about,
for to allay their hand:
There was no shoot these yeomen shot,
that any prick might stand,
Then spake William of Cloudesle,
by him that for me died;
I hold him never good Archer,
that shooteth at Butts so wide.
Whereat then said the King,
I pray thee tell to me:
At such a But sir he said,

as men use in Country.
William went into the field,
and his two brethren with him,
There they set up two hasal rods,
twenty score pace between:
I hold him an Archer said Cloudesle,
that yonder wand cleaveth in two;
Here is none such, said the King,
for no man can so do.
I shall assay sir said Cloudesle,
or that I further go:
Cloudesle with a bearing arrow,
cleave the wand in two.
Thou art the best Archer, said the King,
forsooth that ever I see:
And yet for your love said William,
I will do more mastery.
I have a son is seven year old,
he is to me full dear:
I will tie him to a stake,
all shall see that be here,
And lay an Apple upon his head,
and go six score pace him fro,
And I my self with a broad arrow,
shall cleave the Apple in two.
Now hast thee then, said the King,
by him that dyed on a tree,
But if thou dost not as thou hast said,
hanged shalt thou be,
And if thou touch his head or gown,
in sight that man may see;
By all the Saints that be in heaven,
I shall you hang all three:
That I have promised said William,
I never will forsake:

And there even before the King,
in the Earth he drove a Stake;
And bound thereto his eldest Son,
and bad him stand still thereat;
And turn'd the childs face him fro,
because he should not start.
An apple upon his head he set,
and there his bow he bent:
Sixscore paces there were met,
and thither Cloudesle went.
There he drew out a fair broad arrow,
his bow was great and long:
He set that arrow in his bow,
which was both stiffe and strong.
He prayed the people that were there
that they would still stand:
For he that shooteth for such a wager,
had need of a steddie hand.
Much people prayed for Cloudesle,
that his life saved might be:
And when he made him ready to shoot,
there many a weeping eye.
Thus Cloudesle clave the apple in two,
as many a man might see:
Now God forbid then said the King,
that thou shouldest shoot at me,
I give thee xviii. pence a day,
and my bow shalt thou bear:
And over all the North Country,
I make thee chief Rider:
And ile give thee xiii. pence a day, said the Queen
by God and by my fay,
Come fetch thy payment when thou wilt,
no man shall say the nay.
William, I make thee a Gentleman,

of cloathing and of fee:
And thy two brethren yeomen of my chamber,
for they are lovely to see:
your son he is tender of age,
of my wine celler shall be,
And when he comes to Mans estate,
better preferred shall be.
And William bring me your wife, said the (Queen
I long full sore to see:
She shall be my chief Gentle-woman
to govern my Nursery.
The yeomen thanked them full courteously,
and said to some Bishop we will wend,
Of all the sins that we have done,
to be alloiled at his hand.
So forth be gone these good yeomen,
as fast as they can hie.
And after came and lived with the King,
and dyed good yeomen all three.
Thus ended the lives of these good yeomen,
God send them eternal bliss:
And all that with hand bow shooteth,
that of heaven may never miss.

FINIS.